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Request for the inclusion of an item in the provisional agenda of the sixty-sixth session

Observer status for the International Renewable Energy Agency in the General Assembly

Letter dated 11 July 2011 from the Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Pursuant to rule 13 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, I have the honour to request the inclusion in the provisional agenda of the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly of an item entitled "Observer status for the International Renewable Energy Agency in the General Assembly".

In accordance with rule 20 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, an explanatory memorandum on and description of the International Renewable Energy Agency (annex I) and a draft resolution (annex II) are attached.

I would like to request that this letter and its annexes be circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

(*Signed*) Ahmed **Al-Jarman**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex I

Explanatory memorandum

Historical background

1. The proposal for an international agency dedicated to renewable energy was made in 1981 at the United Nations Conference on New and Renewable Sources of Energy in Nairobi. The idea was further discussed and developed by organizations working in the field of renewable energy.

2. Since 1981, global interest in renewable energy has been increasing, and governments have sought to respond to the growing demand for international cooperation on renewable energy policies, financing and technologies. Several international meetings, such as the World Summit for Sustainable Development in 2002 in Johannesburg and the Group of Eight Gleneagles Dialogue on Climate Change, Clean Energy and Sustainable Development, have discussed these issues. The International Conference for Renewable Energies held in June 2004, supported by the International Parliamentary Forum on Renewable Energies, also called for the establishment of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA).

3. Through the combined efforts of Governments across the world, the idea came to life with the establishment of IRENA on 26 January 2009 at its Founding Conference in Bonn, Germany. The founding of IRENA was a significant milestone for world renewable energy deployment and a clear sign that the global energy paradigm was changing as a result of growing commitments from Governments. At the Founding Conference, 75 States representing all parts of the world signed the Agency's statute. Since then, the IRENA statute has been signed by 150 States, of which 80 have ratified the statute to date. The European Union is also a ratifying member of IRENA.

4. The First Assembly of IRENA was held on 4 and 5 April 2011. The Assembly adopted a number of significant decisions, including the Work Programme and a budget totalling $24.9 million. The Assembly also decided that the permanent seat of the Agency would be Abu Dhabi.

Symbols and motto

5. The symbol of IRENA is a blue infinity sign surrounding the world, representing the potential of infinite energy supply through the uptake of renewable energy.

Membership

6. The 151 States and regional organizations that have become engaged in IRENA since its establishment in 2009 are a testimony to the relevance and importance that the majority of United Nations Members place on the IRENA mandate and mission. As at July 2011, 80 Member States and the European Union had ratified the statute: Albania, Antigua and Barbuda, Armenia, Australia, Bangladesh, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Cape Verde, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Eritrea, Fiji, Finland, France, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Grenada, Iceland, India, Israel, Japan, Kenya, Latvia, Lesotho, Liechtenstein, Lithuania,

Luxembourg, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Mozambique, Nauru, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Palau, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Samoa, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Tonga, United Arab Emirates and United States of America.

7. The following States are signatories to the statute: Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Estonia, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Honduras, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kiribati, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Mauritania, Morocco, Nepal, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Sao Tome and Principe, Solomon Islands, Somalia, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Yemen, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Organizational structure

8. The principal organs of IRENA are the Assembly, the Council and the Secretariat. The Assembly, comprising the members of IRENA, is the supreme organ of the Agency. The Council comprises up to 21 members of the Agency, which are elected on a rotating basis for a term of two years. The Secretariat comprises a Director-General, who is its head and chief administrative officer, and such staff as may be required. The Director-General is appointed by the Assembly for a term of four years, renewable for an additional term of four years.

9. The Agency is headquartered in Abu Dhabi and has a Centre for Innovation and Technology in Bonn, Germany.

Mandate

10. Pursuant to articles II and III of its statute, IRENA is mandated with promoting the widespread and increased adoption and the sustainable use of all forms of renewable energy, produced from renewable sources in a sustainable manner, which include, inter alia, bioenergy; geothermal energy; hydropower; ocean energy, including tidal, wave and ocean thermal energy; solar energy and wind energy. IRENA discharges its mandate with due regard to:

(a) National and domestic priorities and benefits derived from a combined approach of renewable energy and energy efficiency measures;

(b) The contribution of renewable energy to environmental preservation, through limiting pressure on natural resources and reducing deforestation, particularly tropical deforestation, desertification and biodiversity loss; to climate protection; to economic growth and social cohesion including poverty alleviation and sustainable development; to access to and security of energy supply; to regional development and to inter-generational responsibility.

11. For the benefit of its members, the Agency:

(a) Analyses, monitors and, without obligations on members' policies, systematizes current renewable energy practices, including policy instruments, incentives, investment mechanisms, best practices, available technologies, integrated systems and equipment, and success-failure factors;

(b) Initiates discussion and ensures interaction with other governmental and non-governmental organizations and networks in this and other relevant fields;

(c) Provides relevant policy advice and assistance to its members upon their request, taking into account their respective needs, and stimulates international discussions on renewable energy policy and its framework conditions;

(d) Improves pertinent knowledge and technology transfer and promotes the development of local capacity and competence in member States including necessary interconnections;

(e) Offers capacity-building including training and education to its members;

(f) Provides to its members upon their request advice on the financing for renewable energy and supports the application of related mechanisms;

(g) Stimulates and encourages research, including on socio-economic issues, and fosters research networks, joint research, development and deployment of technologies;

(h) Provides information about the development and deployment of national and international technical standards in relation to renewable energy, based on a sound understanding through an active presence in the relevant forums.

12. Furthermore, the Agency disseminates information and increases public awareness on the benefits and potential offered by renewable energy.

Advantages for the United Nations in granting observer status to the International Renewable Energy Agency

13. Pursuant to article IV of the statute, IRENA performs its activities in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations to promote peace and international cooperation, in conformity with policies of the United Nations that further sustainable development. In pursuit of its mandate, IRENA complements global and sectoral mandates and strategies of the United Nations and its departments, programmes and agencies, such as the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the World Meteorological Organization, the World Intellectual Property Organization and the World Bank.

14. There is clear potential for close cooperation between the United Nations and IRENA. Identifying synergies and coordinating activities would ensure efficient use of resources and coherence in addressing major challenges such as fighting climate change, alleviating poverty and promoting sustainable development by tapping into the potential that renewable energy offers. IRENA is a fully committed global partner with expertise that can help address these challenges.

Advantages for the International Renewable Energy Agency in obtaining observer status in the General Assembly

15. The following of and participation in the relevant aspects of the work of the General Assembly and related United Nations processes would enable IRENA to be more incisive in pursuing its mission and help ensure that its work is effectively integrated in global efforts in development cooperation and the promotion of sustainable development. Identifying opportunities for partnership and cooperation with United Nations entities and associated organizations and networks with related aims would be instrumental to advancing the Agency's mission.

16. Ultimately, by obtaining observer status with the United Nations, IRENA would become more efficient and effective in pursuit of its mission to promote the widespread and increased adoption of renewable energy with a view to sustainable development.

Annex II

Draft resolution

Observer status for the International Renewable Energy Agency in the General Assembly

The General Assembly,

Considering the unique status of the International Renewable Energy Agency and its mission to promote the adoption and use of renewable energy with a view to sustainable development,

Convinced of the benefits of cooperation between the United Nations and the International Renewable Energy Agency,

1. *Decides* to invite the International Renewable Energy Agency to participate in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly in the capacity of observer;

2. *Requests* the Secretary-General to take the necessary action to implement the present resolution.